



STAFF REPORT

CITY OF COLUMBUS PLAN COMMISSION (June 10, 2015 Meeting)

Docket No. / Project Title: RZ-15-03 (City of Columbus, Water Street)
Staff: Ashley Klingler
Applicant: City of Columbus
Property Size: 3.53 Acres
Current Zoning: P (Public/Semi Public)
Proposed Zoning: CD (Commercial: Downtown Center)
Location: Between State Road 46 East (Robert N. Stewart Bridge) and Water Street and directly west of the East Fork of the White River, in the City of Columbus.

Background Summary:

The applicant has indicated that the proposed rezoning is for the purpose of expanding Columbus' commercial downtown area closer to the riverfront. This application was initially filed as a rezoning to CDc (Commercial: Downtown with Commitments), with the commitments being limitations on the permitted uses. The applicant has amended their request to omit those use limitations. This means every use in the CD (Commercial: Downtown) zoning district would be allowed at this location, if rezoned.

Key Issue Summary:

The following key issue(s) should be resolved through the consideration of this application:

1. When should the right-of-way be dedicated for Water Street?
2. To what extent and on what timeline should Water Street be improved?

Preliminary Staff Recommendation:

Approval with the following commitments:

1. As part of, or prior to, the development of the property, the Water Street right-of-way (from 1st Street extending to the southern most property line of the subject property in the rezoning) will be dedicated. The right-of-way will be consistent with the policies in the Thoroughfare Plan (or equivalent document at the time of the dedication) and subject to Board of Public Works and Safety approval.
2. As part of, or prior to, the development of the property, Water Street (from 1st Street extending to the southern most property line of the subject property in the rezoning) will be improved to the minimum City standards for a Local, Commercial, Urban street as specified by the Subdivision Control Ordinance (or equivalent document at the time of the improvements), with the understanding that the space for on-street parking is optional.
3. The development of the property shall accommodate the future extension of a multi-use path along the west side of Water Street consistent with the Columbus Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Space reserved for path extension shall be subject to the review and approval of the Planning Department.
4. The Plan Commission should note that Indiana Code would allow the request to be forwarded to the City Council with "no recommendation". This may be appropriate if the Plan Commission determines that the discussed sale of this City-owned property creates considerations that are beyond the Commissions role and/or expertise.

Plan Commission Options:

In reviewing a request for rezoning the Plan Commission may (1) forward a favorable recommendation to the City Council, (2) forward an unfavorable recommendation to the City Council, (3) forward the application to City Council with no recommendation, or (4) continue the review to the next Plan Commission meeting. The Plan Commission may recommend that conditions or commitments be attached to the rezoning request. The City Council makes all final decisions regarding rezoning applications.

Decision Criteria:

Indiana law and the Columbus Zoning Ordinance require that the Plan Commission and City Council pay reasonable regard to the following when considering a rezoning:

The Comprehensive Plan.

Preliminary Staff Comments: The subject property is in the Floodway/Sensitive Area. The floodway and floodplain are protected by specific regulations both by the City and by IDNR. This area is considered in the Greenbelt around the Downtown. This area is designated as a prime location to continue to link greenspaces and parks with the People Trail. The subject property is adjacent to the Mixed-Use Downtown area and Downtown Expansion District. This area is specifically designated for future development. This rezoning potentially promotes infill development, which prevents urban sprawl, and which is an efficient use of limited resources and nonrenewable resources, including land. The subject property is near State Road 46, and according to the Downtown Strategic Development Plan it is an appropriate area for investment along the riverfront to improve the gateway into Downtown.

The current conditions and the character of current structures and uses in each district.

Preliminary Staff Comments: The current character of the subject property is characterized by a building and otherwise vacant land.

The most desirable use for which the land in each district is adapted.

Preliminary Staff Comments: This property is located between downtown Columbus and the White River, both of which are assets that could be capitalized on to fuel its redevelopment. Likewise, if redeveloped, the property could contribute positively to both the downtown and the riverfront.

The conservation of property values throughout the jurisdiction of the City of Columbus.

Preliminary Staff Comments: The expansion of the downtown area would draw more people downtown, and in this instance to the riverfront, and therefore increase the value of the adjoining properties.

Responsible growth and development.

Preliminary Staff Comments: This proposed rezoning promotes infill development which is an efficient use of limited resources and nonrenewable resources, including land. This rezoning would expand the commercial footprint of the downtown and allow for the natural asset that the river provides. The vicinity, however, currently lacks suitable street infrastructure to support development, and the provision of that infrastructure should be assured as part of any rezoning approval.

Current Property Information:	
Land Use:	Storage/ Undeveloped
Site Features:	8,352 sq.ft. storage building and access driveway. Vacant grassy area.
Flood Hazards:	As shown on Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) 18005C0133E, effective December 9, 2014, the subject property is located in three flood zones: Flood Zone AE (Floodway), Flood Zone AE, and Flood Zone X (Shaded). Flood Zone AE is more commonly called the 100-year floodway fringe, and Flood Zone X (Shaded) is more commonly called the 500-year floodway fringe.

Special Circumstances: (Airport Hazard Area, Wellfield Protection Area, etc.)	None present.
Vehicle Access:	Water Street (Local, Commercial, Urban)

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use:		
	Zoning:	Land Use:
North:	CD (Commercial: Downtown Center)	Louisville and Indiana Rail Road, veterans memorial, downtown Columbus
South:	P (Public/Semi Public)	Vacant grassy land, river access ramp, former Columbus sewage treatment plant site
East:	CD (Commercial: Downtown Center)	Louisville and Indiana Rail Road, vacant property
West:	AP (Agriculture: Preferred)	East Fork of the White River, with agriculture across the river.

Zoning District Summary (Existing / Proposed):		
	Existing Zoning: P (Public/Semi Public)	Proposed Zoning: CD (Commercial: Downtown Center)
Zoning District Intent:	Intended to provide locations for large-scale public facilities, worship facilities, and concentrations of other public institutions. This district should be applied in those locations where a single facility or combination of facilities forms an institutional center. This district is further intended to provide a set of setbacks and other requirement that respond to the unique scale and other considerations common to these types of uses. This district should be applied to reduce land use conflicts and ensure that public and semi-public facilities are appropriately integrated into the community.	Intended to serve as the primary commercial and activity center, where a complete range of goods, services, and entertainment is located. This district is intended to serve as a focal point, and to be the most intensely developed area in the community. This district is further intended to support the continued use of historic structures, to ensure a pedestrian-focused character, and to enable continued investment.
Permitted and Proposed Uses:	Group 1 Uses: Residential Uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursing home/ assisted living facility • Retirement facility 	Permitted Uses: Residential Uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bed and breakfast facility • dwellings, secondary (on upper floors of other use)

Zoning District Summary (Existing / Proposed):

	Existing Zoning: P (Public/Semi Public)	Proposed Zoning: CD (Commercial: Downtown Center)
	<p>Communications/Utilities Uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications service exchange <p>Public/Semi-Public Uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cemetery • Clinic • Community center • Community garden • Day care center (adult or child) • Government office • Hospital • Institution for the developmentally disabled / mentally ill • Library • Private club • Museum • Parking lot / garage (as a primary use) • Police, fire, or rescue station • Post office • School (grades pre-school through 12) • Trade or business school • University or college • Worship facility <p>Park Uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golf course • Nature preserve / conservation area • Park / playground <p>Commercial Uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference center • Health spa • Instructional center • Retreat center 	<p>Public / Semi-Public Uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinic • day-care center (adult or child) • funeral home • government office • library • museum • parking lot / garage (as a primary use) • police, fire, or rescue station • post office • trade or business school <p>Park Uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nature preserve / conservation area • park / playground <p>Commercial Uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conference center • data processing / call center • farmer's market • health spa • hotel / motel • instructional center • liquor store • office uses • personal service uses • recreation uses (small scale) • recreation uses (medium scale) • restaurant • retail uses (small scale) • retail uses (medium scale)
	<p>Group 2 Uses:</p> <p>Communications/Utilities Uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sewage treatment plan • Utility substation • Water tower • Wellfield/water treatment facility <p>Public/ Semi-Public Uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airport (public) • Animal shelter • Correctional facility • Fairgrounds 	<p>Conditional Uses:</p> <p>Residential Uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dwellings, multi-family • dwelling, single-family • dwelling, two-family • retirement facility • shared housing facility • sewage treatment plant • utility substation • water tower *see also Section 1.2(B)(5) for exemptions

Zoning District Summary (Existing / Proposed):		
	Existing Zoning: P (Public/Semi Public)	Proposed Zoning: CD (Commercial: Downtown Center)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government facility (non-office) Park Uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amphitheater/ outdoor venue • Athletic complex • Driving range 	Public / Semi-Public Uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community center • correctional facility • hospital • private club • school (grades pre-school through 12) • transportation terminal • university or college • worship facility Park Uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • amphitheater / outdoor venue • athletic complex Commercial Uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agricultural supply facility • auto-oriented uses (small scale) • auto rental (includes truck, RV, etc.) • retreat center Industrial Uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agricultural products terminal • light industrial assembly & distribution • research & development facility • wholesale facility
Water and Sewer Service:	Required	Required
Lot and/or Density Requirement:	Minimum Lot Area: 20,000 sq.ft Minimum Lot Width: 50 ft. Minimum Lot Frontage: 50 ft. Maximum Lot Coverage: 65%	Minimum Lot Area: 3,000 sq.ft Minimum Lot Width: 20 ft. Minimum Lot Frontage: 20 ft. Maximum Lot Coverage: 100%
Setbacks Required:	Side Yard Setback: 10 ft. Rear Yard Setback: 10 ft. Front Yard Setback: 10 ft.* for a Local Street. *25 ft. for any auto service bay, auto fuel pump canopy, or similar vehicle access points to structures.	Side Yard Setback: 0 ft. Rear Yard Setback: 0 ft. Front Yard Setback: 0 ft. build-to* *the build-to line shall not apply to primary structures on properties which include outdoor dining, assembly, or similar space which conforms to a 0 ft. build-to line.
Height Restrictions:	Primary Structure: 45 ft. Accessory Structure: 25 ft.	Primary Structure: 125 ft. Accessory Structure: 35 ft.

Interdepartmental Review:	
Floodplain Administrator:	<p>As shown on Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) 18005C0133E, effective December 9, 2014, the subject property is located in three flood zones: Flood Zone AE (Floodway), Flood Zone AE, and Flood Zone X (Shaded). Flood Zone AE is more commonly called the 100-year floodway fringe, and Flood Zone X (Shaded) is more commonly called the 500-year floodway fringe.</p> <p>As stated in Section 4.7(I) of the City of Columbus-Bartholomew County Zoning Ordinance, all development and land altering activities, including the construction of new buildings, the placement of fill, and the creation of any other potential obstructions to the flow of floodwater shall be prohibited in all floodways. However, the Ordinance provides some exemptions that may be applicable provided that all necessary Indiana Department of Natural Resources approvals are obtained and all other applicable provisions of Section 4.7 are met.</p> <p>In reference to the east parcel, the following exemptions may apply: (1) expansion of buildings and uses that are pre-existing in the floodway, and (2) construction of buildings and uses of pre-existing lots that have been previously, specifically established for development. For the second exemption, established is defined as having an approved and unexpired preliminary plat. In reference to the west parcel, the following exemptions may apply: (1) marinas, boat ramps, fishing piers, and other similar water-related recreation facilities, and (2) streets, roads, bridges, pedestrian paths, and related infrastructure.</p> <p>If the development proposal for these lots occurs within the floodway but is determined to be exempt from the prohibition in the floodway, the land altering activities will require review and approval from IDNR per Section 4.7(I)(2) of the Zoning Ordinance. Also, any new structures in the floodway or floodway fringe areas must be elevated or flood-proofed to or above the flood protection grade consistent with Zoning Ordinance Section 4.7.</p>
City Engineering:	When the 2 parcels are developed, Water Street will need to be improved to meet current City Standards. Right of way will also need to be dedicated at that time.
City Fire:	No Comments.
City Utilities:	No Comments.
Parks Department:	No Comments.
Health Department:	No Comments.

History of this Location:

The relevant history of this property includes the following:

1. In 2003, this area was proposed by the Plan Commission to be rezoned (Plan Commission Case # C/RZ-03-15) from SU-11 (Public Buildings and Uses) and I-2 (Medium Industrial) to B-3 (Central Business District). The City Council denied the request and suggested additional discussion as to the future use of the property. The rezoning had been requested by the Waterfront Committee and was primarily an effort to replace the industrial zoning on the property.

2. The properties remained as I-2 (Medium Industrial) and SU-11 (Public Buildings and Uses) until 2008 when they were rezoned to P (Public/Semi Public) with the adoption of the replacement Zoning Ordinance and map.

Comprehensive Plan Consideration(s):

The Future Land Use Map indicates the future use of this property as Floodway/Sensitive Area. The property is immediately adjacent to the Mixed-Use area.

The following Comprehensive Plan goal(s) and/or policy(ies) apply to this application:

1. **GOAL A-1:** Maintain the small-city atmosphere as the community grows
2. **POLICY A-2-1:** Strive to eliminate blighted areas.
3. **POLICY A-2-3:** Ensure that development takes place in a manner which allows for preservation of farmland, open space, and significant natural features whenever possible and desirable.
4. **POLICY A-2-13:** Encourage growth to take place at a rate that enables the city to maintain the high quality of public services.
5. **GOAL A-4:** Promote wise and efficient use of limited resources and nonrenewable resources, including but not limited to capital and land
6. **POLICY A-4-2:** Encourage infill development, and/or use of vacant parcels for projects such as parks or other amenities which complement the neighborhoods in which they are located.
7. **POLICY A-4-3:** Prevent urban sprawl.
8. **POLICY A-4-6:** Encourage wise use of infrastructure dollars.
9. **POLICY B-1-1:** Protect floodway areas from development to prevent runoff which could pollute streams and rivers.
10. **POLICY B-1-9:** Encourage new development to be designed in a manner which preserves natural topography and other natural features, including but not limited to trees, woodlands, wetlands, streams, ponds, and drainage ways.
11. **GOAL B-3:** Develop a comprehensive network of natural areas to enhance and protect our fragile environment.
12. **POLICY B-3-1:** Protect river and stream banks in the parks department stewardship from soil erosion and stabilize the banks through protective plantings.
13. **POLICY B-3-2:** Encourage private owners to protect the banks in their ownership from erosion and to stabilize them through plantings.
14. **POLICY C-1-8:** Continue to link green spaces and parks with People Trails.
15. **POLICY J-2-2:** Maintain and enhance the vitality, cleanliness, and appearance of all areas of the city.

This property is located in the Eastern Rural Area character area. The following Planning Principle(s) apply to this application: Commercial and industrial development should be located only along arterials or at major intersections. This development should be in neighborhood business centers or rural business centers, not on individual parcels with separate curb cuts. The subject property is immediately adjacent to the Downtown Columbus character district.

According to the Downtown Columbus Strategic Development Plan, the subject property is in the Green Belt. This area is ideal for providing access and creating settings that encourage recreation. The greenbelt proposes the addition of a network trails and public spaces. The People Trail and Gateway should be considered when planning the Greenbelt. The People Trail network should be expanded to further connect downtown and other neighborhoods. Further invest in the riverfront along the SR 46 and Indianapolis Road gateways to Downtown. The subject property is immediately adjacent to the Downtown Expansion District.

According to the Columbus Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, this area shows a future "downtown connector" passing through this property and linking the Mill Race- Noblitt Trail with the Haw Creek Trail.

Planning Consideration(s):

The following general site considerations, planning concepts, and other facts should be considered in the review of this application:

1. Both P (Public/Semi Public) existing and CD (Commercial: Downtown Center) proposed zoning districts are site development districts. This means that the details of any development plan are subject to review and approval by the Plan Commission.
2. The general regulations for setbacks and lot coverage allow more dense development in the proposed CD zoning district compared to the current P zoning.
3. Water Street does not currently have a platted right-of-way. According to the Thoroughfare Plan, this street is considered a Local, Commercial, Urban street, and the right-of-way should be 65 feet wide.
4. Currently, Water Street's paved area is about 17 feet in width. There is no curb, no sidewalk, and no street trees existing. The pavement is crumbling on the edges and has many potholes. According to the Thoroughfare Plan, this street is considered a Local, Commercial, Urban street. The Subdivision Control Ordinance calls out the following requirements for this type of street: two 11 feet wide lanes, and an 8 foot wide parking lane on each side, totaling 38 feet of pavement. There should also be a 6 foot wide sidewalk, curbs, and street trees.